How Tommy Saved the Barn

By James Otis

THE SUNSHINE LIBRARY

For Young People

This admirable line of books for young people contains some of the choicest stories for children ever written. The volumes are well printed, illustrated with frontispieces, and attractively bound in new styles, with separate design by the best artists for each cover. New colored wrappers. Each volume, 8vo, 50 cents. Complete list of titles and authors is as follows:

Aunt Hannah and Seth. James Otis
Blind Brother. Homer Greene
Captain's Dog. Louis Énault
Candle and the Cat. Mary F. Leonard
Caxton Club. Amos R. Wells
Child and the Tree. Bessie K. Ulrich
Christmas at Deacon Hackett's. James Otis
Christmas Tree Scholar. Francis Bent Dillingham
Daddy Darwin's Dovecote. Mrs. J. H. Ewing
Daisies and Diggleses. Evelyn Raymond
Days Before History. H. R. Hall
Dear Little Marchioness.
Dick in the Desert. James Otis
Divided Skates. Evelyn Raymond
Golden Key. George Macdonald
Gold Thread. Norman McLeod
Half a Dozen Thinking Caps. Mary F. Leonard
How the Twins Captured a Hessian. James Otis
How Tommy Saved the Barn. James Otis
I Can School. Eva A. Madden
J. Cole. Emma Gellibrand
Jessica's First Prayer. Hesba Stretton
King of the Golden River. John Ruskin

Gerald

From

Miss Armstrong.

Dec. 15. 1915

THE ARRIVAL. — Page 23.

HOW TOMMY SAVED THE BARN

BY

JAMES OTIS

TWENTY-FIRST THOUSAND

NEW YORK
THOMAS Y. CROWELL COMPANY
PUBLISHERS

COPYRIGHT, 1895,
BY THOMAS Y. CROWELL & COMPANY.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER.		PAGE
I.	The Arrival	5
II.	The Hackett Farm	20
III.	The Rescue	35
IV.	Joey's Displeasure	49
V.	A Night of Excitement	63
VI.	Luke's Future	77

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026

https://archive.org/details/howtommysavedbar0000jame

HOW TOMMY SAVED THE BARN.

CHAPTER I.

THE ARRIVAL.

BOSTON, *June* 2, 1894.

MR. HIRAM HACKETT, Monroe Corner, Me.

My dear Sir, — Your kindly and generous proposition to board and care for three children, for a term of two weeks during the present month, at your farm, is received; and the Society thanks you sincerely for the interest shown in its work.

To-morrow, by the first train leaving Boston, we shall send the children selected, trusting you will meet them at the station.

The eldest is Luke Bradley, an orphan twelve years old, and a cripple. Since the death of his parents he has been cared for by Mrs. Howard, a poor widow with one daughter. This girl, aged eleven, will accompany Luke; and the third member of the party is a boy, by name Thomas Wright, a newsboy only eight years of age, who has during the past year materially assisted his mother in earning a livelihood for a family of four small children.

We have not selected these three because they seemed the most deserving, but because they are sadly in need of such an outing.

Will you kindly advise us of their arrival?

Yours very respectfully,

JAMES N. HARVEY, *Secretary.*

"Well, mother," Deacon Hackett said when he finished reading aloud the letter as given above, "so our company's comin', an' we haven't a great deal of time left to make preparations. I allow they'll want a power of food, for I don't s'pose the little things get more'n one full meal a day."

"There won't be any lack of that, Hiram; for I had an idee the Society would send the visitors right soon, an' Mehitable an' I did a deal of bakin' Saturday. I ain't afeered as to their goin' hungry; but it'll be a dreadful trial to have three children tramplin' 'round over my flower-beds, scarin' chickens, an' makin' poor Ajax's life a burden."

The cat was purring contentedly in her lap. Mrs. Hackett stroked his soft fur as if to make amends for the troubles which the animal would probably experience during the sojourn of the visitors.

"Well, one of 'em can't do much harm if he's a cripple," the deacon replied meditatively. "I

don't allow the girl will be likely to traipse 'round any very great deal; but that eight-year-old Thomas may make a power of trouble for us. I guess I'd better rig up some kind of a door to the brindle calf's pen, so they can't get in; for I've heerd tell there's nothin' city children are so mischievous with as a calf. This 'ere invitin' three youngsters to the farm seems like a duty, mother; but I'm willin' to confess it's goin' to be a great burden on all of us. I expect everything will be turned upside down, an' " —

"Perhaps it won't be as bad as you think, father. At all events, we shall have the satisfaction of knowin' we're doin' what's right, an' at the same time givin' pleasure to three poor benighted little bein's, who probably never saw the trees an' flowers an' grass except in the city, where such things are not allowed to grow as the good God intended. I don't know but that I'd better take up the carpet in the fore-room to save its bein' scuffed all to pieces."

"If the weather holds good, mother, I don't reckon they'll trouble the fore-room a great sight. Most likely they'll be gettin' into mischief 'round the farm; an' it 'pears to me like as if we oughter have somebody to kinder herd 'em up nights, else we may not find 'em when it's time to go to bed.

I'm too old an' rheumaticky to run from here to the Corner many times a day; 'an, — why, mother, I b'lieve I'd rather break a pair of steers than try to keep three city children straight."

"Don't worry, father, don't worry. Perhaps it won't be as bad as we imagine. Now, there's that Ramsdell boy; he's always roamin' 'round, an' don't seem to be doin' much of any good to home: why wouldn't it be as well to hire him to look out for the visitors? He'd like nothin' better, an' it would take such a power of care off our shoulders!"

"I don't know which would be worse, mother, city children, or Joey Ramsdell. He's a master hand at gettin' into trouble, an' I ain't certain it wouldn't be makin' a bad matter worse to bring him 'round here."

"I don't think Joey's malicious, father. It's the way of children to be runnin' 'round makin' a noise. You an' Mehitable an' I 've lived here alone so many years, we've kinder got out of young peoples' ways. Now, if Joey'd come, it seems as if we might trust the visitors with him."

"I'm afeered it'll be like trustin' a fox in a chicken-coop, Mary; but if you think best I'll find out whether he's willin' to herd 'em up or not."

"S'pose we try him for a day. If he makes the visitors worse than they are naturally, we can send him home."

"I'll ask him 'bout it to-night. 'Cordin' to this letter the youngsters'll be here 'bout noon to-morrow; an' I'd better spend the rest of this day gatherin' things up, so's to know where to find 'em after they've gone."

Then, with a certain raising of the stooped shoulders, as if involuntarily bracing himself to sustain the self-imposed burden so soon to be put upon them, Deacon Hackett went out into the primly-kept dooryard, where he stood looking about him much as though reckoning up the amount of damage which might be done during the coming fortnight.

Mrs. Hackett went into the pantry for one brief survey of the well-filled shelves to assure herself there was sufficient food already prepared to satisfy the hunger of the guests until more could be cooked, and then, returning to the wooden rocker by the kitchen window, took Ajax into her lap, where he purred and sang contentedly, unconscious of the possible trials and sorrows which might be his when those sent in the name of charity should arrive.

On the following day, an hour before it was

time for the train to arrive, Deacon Hackett drove up to the kitchen door in the two-seated wagon, leaned over the dash-board in a meditative way to brush a fly from Dobbin's sleek hide, and, taking a long, deliberate survey of his surroundings, said to his wife, who was sitting in the kitchen with Ajax perched on the window-ledge opposite her, —

"I reckon everything's all right, mother?"

"I'm sure I hope so," the good woman replied, with a long-drawn sigh which was half suppressed by surprise at having dropped two stitches in her knitting. "I've tried to do my best, an' it seems — it's no use for me to knit this forenoon. This is the third time I've missed the seam, I'm so kinder flustrated with the idee of havin' children 'round. It seems as if even Ajax realized that his peaceable home was to be turned into a regular hob-bobbery for the next two weeks. I hope, father, we haven't made a mistake in askin' 'em to come here."

"I'm sure we haven't," the deacon replied heartily, and added less confidently, "We must try to put up with their noise an' dirt, 'cause so long as the poor things are comin', it's our duty to make 'em enjoy themselves. We've lived alone so many years, mother, that we've grown terrible set in our ways, perhaps too much so, an' I wouldn't be

surprised if a change did us a power of good; leastways, we'll hope so. I've fixed it so's they can't worry the brindle calf, an' now I reckon we'd better get along towards the depot. It ain't that there's any call for hurryin'; but I allers like to have plenty of time."

In this last respect Dobbin was like his master. He, too, apparently, wanted plenty of time; for the deacon chirruped and clucked fully a moment before he so much as moved. Then, with a deprecating flap of his ears, as if to say he disapproved of inviting city folks to the farm, since by so doing an extra journey to the station was necessary, he moved down the long lane, bordered on either side with vivid green, and flecked here and there with yellow dandelions, into the main road which ran side by side with a talkative brook.

If the train should arrive promptly on schedule time, there was yet more than half an hour for Deacon Hackett to wait when he arrived at the station; but this was by no means a source of trouble to the good man. Several of his neighbors would be there, and an opportunity of discussing affairs spiritual and temporal was not to be neglected.

He fastened Dobbin to a convenient hitching-

post with a halter at least an inch in diameter, although that faithful animal was never known to move save when it was absolutely necessary; and then was about to join the little party of loungers, when Joey Ramsdell, his freckled face glowing with repeated applications of soap and water, and his short red hair standing up from his head in every direction, as if in a state of the greatest excitement, ran eagerly toward him.

"I was afraid you wouldn't get here, Deacon."

"Why, how is that? It can't be possible our clock is wrong? I allowed to have plenty of time."

"Well, you haven't got more'n you want."

"What o'clock is it?"

"Most ten minutes past 'leven."

"But the train don't get here till twenty minutes of twelve."

"I know that; but you've got a good deal to 'tend to. You see, Deacon, if all them children are comin', it seems as if you an' I oughter know what we're goin' to do."

"I reckon we shan't have much trouble about it, Joey. But what made you come down? There was no need of it. I jest wanted you to stay 'round the place an' look out for the youngsters; but I didn't count on your bein' here."

"I guess I know how to take care of city folks, an' it wouldn't do at all for me to wait an' meet 'em up to your place. I've got to be right on hand, same's you have, Deacon, else something'll go wrong. Why, when Mis' Walker's folks come down last summer, an' they hadn't ever been in the country before, it didn't seem as though they knowed enough to get into the wagon. Sam told me Jerry said he had to almost pull 'em long, they acted so kinder s'prised."

"Well, I guess I can manage three of 'em, Joey, seein's how they're small ones, so there won't be any need of you till afternoon."

"But mother said as how Mis' Hackett had been makin' more'n six custard-pies, them great thick fellers."

"An' you're allowin' to know what they taste like this afternoon, eh?" the deacon asked, with a hearty laugh.

"Well, I allers did set a sight by Mis' Hackett's custards," Joey replied, just a trifle abashed. "Of course, if you think I'd better not come till after dinner, why I can put it off; but if I'm goin' to do this job for you, Deacon, I'd like to start right in the first thing. You see, Sam says handlin' city folks is a good deal like takin' care of steers: you want to get acquainted with 'em before you

begin; an' if I didn't go till late, an' hadn't seen 'em, it might be something would happen."

"Very well, Joey, very well! You shall break 'em in your way, only — Now, remember this, Joey Ramsdell, I've hired you for five cents a week to look after these children. If you lead 'em into mischief, or if you trail 'em off 'round the farm, destroyin' everything, I shan't pay a cent."

"Why, Deacon!" Joey cried in pained surprise. "I thought you knowed me better'n that. You don't s'pose I'd do anything with 'em that wasn't right, do you? I counted on handlin' 'em jest like they was a settin' of turkeys' eggs."

"I ain't doubtin' but that you'll treat them all right, Joey. What I want to caution you 'bout is how you treat the farm an' us that live on it."

"Well, you jest wait an' see, that's all! If I don't do this job right up in shape, you needn't give me a cent. Now, if you say the word, I'll yank 'em off the cars, an' all you'll have to do will be to stay in the wagon an' take 'em."

"I'll 'tend to that part of it, my boy. You can kinder hover 'round an' get their baggage into the cart."

The deacon left his young employee, to join the the group of men on the platform; and finally,

when Joey had begun to be positive some terrible accident had occurred to the train, the rumble which came across the steel rails told that the Boston Accommodation was within the shadow of the Staples' woods exactly on schedule time.

Two minutes later, Joey, with both hands thrust deep into his pockets, and his cap pushed far back on his flame-colored hair, that there might be nothing to impede his vision, saw three odd-looking children descend timidly from the car, casting nervous glances here and there as if in search of some one.

The first, and apparently the eldest of the party, was a tiny girl, whose face seemed to be many years older than her body. Although the day was warm, she was clad in a preposterously long, thick cloak, which was buttoned tightly around her neck, and confined by a narrow bit of faded blue ribbon. A small black straw hat, much the worse for wear, was set squarely on her head, and tied firmly under the chin, as if it had been put there to remain a very long time.

With a motherly solicitude she was half-carrying, half-assisting, a hollow-cheeked, sickly-looking boy on crutches, and at the same time having a watchful care over a small lad, who was devoting all his attention to three paper-covered parcels

which, despite his efforts, caused both himself and those who were following no slight amount of annoyance.

"Well, I don't think much of that crowd," Joey muttered to himself, as he halted on the outside of the throng, undecided whether duty demanded that he should make his way immediately to the side of his employer. "The deacon needn't be afraid everything on the farm is goin' to be torn up by them fellers. The girl is too small to 'mount to anything, an' that boy on crutches couldn't chase a duck."

During the past twenty-four hours Master Ramsdell had indulged in many dreams of the sport which he should have with the "deacon's visitors." He had promised himself two weeks of uninterrupted pleasure, during which he could fish to his heart's content, make long excursions through the Staples' wood-lot, or hunt imaginary Indians over the hills with the guests from the city. He believed Deacon Hackett had been recklessly extravagant in offering him money to do that which he most desired; but now even a dime, the amount of his wages if he should continue in service an entire fortnight, seemed too small to repay for his disappointment.

"I s'pose I've got to stick to the job," he mut-

tered, "'cause I 'greed to. There's one thing about it though," he added, as a smile of satisfaction passed over his face, "that crowd don't look as though they could get away with very many of them big pies Mis' Hackett makes, an' I'll come pretty nigh gettin' my share."

"Come, Joey," the deacon cried cheerily, "you take the bundles out of this little shaver's hand, an' get 'em into the wagon while I look after their baggage."

This aroused Master Ramsdell to a sense of his duty; and, with many unnecessary injunctions and commands, he assisted the party to the wagon.

The girl looked up at the vehicle in dismay.

"However are we goin' to get in there, Luke? It seems terrible high, don't it?"

"I can do it if you give me a lift," the cripple replied, as, steadying himself against the wheel, he threw his crutches into the vehicle.

Joey felt not a little contempt for a boy, or a girl either for that matter, who thought it difficult to get into an ordinary wagon; and, seizing the cripple by the waist, he lifted him up quickly, almost rudely, causing the motherly-looking little girl to cry excitedly, —

"You mustn't be so rough with him! You'll hurt him! Don't push him that way!"

"I've got him in, anyhow," Joey said in a tone of satisfaction, as he deposited his burden with no gentle force upon the second seat of the wagon.

"Are you hurt, Luke?" the girl continued.

"Not a bit, Garry. I come up as easy as nothing. Don't you be so afraid of me, but look out for yourself. Say, this is the country, ain't it? Don't it smell good?"

His tiny guardian made no reply, so intent was she on clambering into the vehicle; and Joey turned his attention to the boy with the bundles.

"I'll chuck 'em under the seat for you."

"You'll chuck nothin'," the stranger replied defiantly. "I'll hold on to what I've got till we get where we're goin'."

Joey looked at the lad in surprise, and then asked angrily:

"Well, you've got there, ain't you? Do you reckon on keepin' them things in your arms till we drive over to the farm?"

"Do you live at the house where we're goin'?"

"No, I don't; but I've been hired to take care of you fellers, an' I'll do it too. What's your name?"

"Tommy Wright."

"Well, Thomas, if you want to hold them

bundles, do it; but get right into that wagon, 'cause I ain't goin' to have the deacon come back here an' see I ain't doin' what he's hired me to do."

Tommy was about to make some angry reply; but a warning gesture from the girl caused him to obey, and he had barely gained the rear seat, where were his friends, when the deacon came up.

"I don't see any baggage," the good man said in perplexity.

"What baggage was you lookin' for, Deacon?" asked Joey.

"Why, what these children brought, of course;" and he turned inquiringly to his guests.

"It's right here;" and Tommy tapped with one finger significantly the packages he held under his arm.

With a look of surprise which amounted almost to bewilderment on his face, Deacon Hackett seated himself in the wagon, was followed by Joey, and, after much urging, Dobbin leisurely ambled down the road.

CHAPTER II.

THE HACKETT FARM.

HEN the little party were on the road to the Hackett Farm, Joey glanced furtively back at the guests; and what he saw did not impress him more favorably in their behalf than had the glimpse he obtained while they were descending from the cars.

All three were sitting on the extreme forward edge of the seat, as if fearing some damage might be done in case a more comfortable position was assumed; and each pair of eyes was opened to the widest extent, as the wonders of the scenery were slowly unfolded.

Then the girl made a remark which convinced Joey he had before him a very disagreeable two-weeks' task, if he concluded to remain in the employ of Deacon Hackett as guide to the guests.

"What splendid flowers!" she exclaimed, pointing to a cluster of yellow blossoms by the wayside.

"You don't call them flowers, I hope," Master Ramsdell said almost severely.

"Why not?" and the child appeared thoroughly surprised.

"'Cause they're nothin' but dandelions. Wait till you see Mis' Hackett's garden, an' then you'll have somethin' to holler at."

"Joey, why do you think dandelions ain't flowers?" the deacon asked, with just a suspicion of a smile.

"'Cause they're nothin' but greens blossomed out;" and Master Ramsdell spoke in a positive tone, which told plainly he felt certain there could be no mistake on his part.

"But, Joey —"

"O Luke! Tommy! *Do* look at that animal! Is it a wolf?"

Joey, with his exceeding wisdom, laughed boisterously; and even the deacon found it difficult to repress a smile, as he replied in a kindly tone: —

"That is a lamb, little girl. I don't reckon you'll find any wolves in this part of the country."

"That's a lamb, Luke," the girl said gravely to the lame boy, much as if believing he had not heard his host's words. "I shan't want to eat any more sausages after seein' him."

"Why not?" and now it was Joey's turn to appear surprised.

"Because it seems so cruel to chop such pretty creatures up into mince-meat."

"An' you think they make sausages out of lambs?"

"Isn't it true?"

Joey was on the point of giving way to his boisterous mirth once more; but the deacon pinched his knee, thus causing him to realize he might give the guests the impression that he was making sport of them; but during the remainder of the ride he had frequent attacks of what seemed very like convulsions, during which he whispered over and over again to himself: —

"Lamb sausages! Lamb sausages!" and rubbed his nose vigorously to hide the mirth apparent on his lips.

From that moment until they arrived at the farmhouse, the guests refrained from audible expressions of pleasure or surprise; but Joey, watching from the corners of his eyes during such times as he was not laughing, noted, to his own amusement, that a brown toad hopping across the road filled them with wonder, while a wren pluming her feathers on an alder bush caused the girl to motion violently with both hand and head lest her companions should miss the rare spectacle.

Mrs. Hackett was at the door ready to welcome

the strangers; and, from the moment she saw their pinched, wan faces, all fear of possible danger to the brindled calf or Ajax was forgotten.

"What a mite of a girl you are, to be sure!" the good woman said, as she lifted the child from the vehicle, and kissed her so heartily that the newcomer looked up at the sweet, grave face in surprise. "And here's one who can't run around very much; but father an' I'll see to it that you don't feel lonesome," the deacon's wife added, as she assisted Luke.

The other boy had leaped from the opposite side of the wagon, still holding tightly the packages which made up the list of "baggage," and during this welcome to the farm was looking with the liveliest curiosity at a mother turkey, who was excitedly telling her brood to keep very near her while the visitors from the city were in the vicinity.

"What is your name, dear?" Mrs. Hackett asked as she led the way into the cool, rest-inviting kitchen.

"This is Luke Bradley," the girl said, pulling forward a chair that the cripple might be seated.

"What shall I call you?"

"Garry."

"What?" Mrs. Hackett repeated, fancying she had misunderstood the child.

"Folks always say that when I tell 'em what my name is. I hated to come out here with it, but Tommy said it couldn't be changed. The whole of it is Garriphilia Howard."

"And it is not a bad name, my child; only it sounded odd to hear you speak of yourself as Garry. Who is Tommy?"

"That's him goin' off there with the horse, an' your — your father. Mercy me! He has left all of our things on the ground, an' that big hen is eatin' 'em!"

Almost before Garry ceased speaking she ran out of doors, and by a great deal of noise, and a vigorous shaking of her dress-skirt, succeeded in frightening away the turkey, who was intent on ascertaining whether the contents of the package were eatable.

Mrs. Hackett, left alone with the cripple, who was peering out of the door eagerly as if some wonderful scene was displayed there, at once set about trying to make him feel more at ease; and when Garry returned with the package rescued from the turkey, Luke had two doughnuts and a big piece of cheese in his hands, while his hostess was trying to persuade him to eat a piece of custard-pie.

It seemed much as if Joey Ramsdell expected that this last-named dainty would be brought out very soon after the guests arrived; for now he came at full speed from the barn, and, seeing the eatables, asked hurriedly:

"What's the name of the feller what come with you?"

"Which one?" Garry asked.

"Him. The feller out there with the deacon?"

"Oh, that's Tommy."

Then at the full strength of his lungs, and without waiting for an invitation from Mrs. Hackett, Master Ramsdell shouted:

"Hi! Tommy! Come quick, for Mis' Hackett's cut one of her custard-pies!"

Tommy obeyed the summons very readily; and, as a matter of course, the good lady divided the pie into four pieces, Joey grumbling not a little because she insisted on his having his portion in a plate, and eating it "with a knife an' fork like a Christian boy," instead of in his hands.

It was as if the food served to make the guests feel more at home, and before the last crumb had disappeared Garry was making a confidant of Mrs. Hackett.

"Mother says it's an awful big mercy that we got a chance to come out here for two whole

weeks; an' we're to behave ourselves, an' not ask for things at the table till they're passed to us. I know Luke will get along all right, 'cause he never makes any trouble; but I ain't so sure 'bout Tommy. He likes to eat terrible well, an' mother said she was afraid you'd think he was a glutton."

"I'll bet I *could* be if there was much pie like this swingin' 'round," added Tommy emphatically, with such a longing look at the empty plate that Mehitable thought it necessary to bring immediately from the pantry a quantity of doughnuts. "You see, when trade's dull, an' a feller can't rake up five cents to buy a dish of beans with, he kinder saves up his bein' hungry till he's got so much on hand that it would take a a month to fill him up."

"Do you have to work for a livin'?" Mrs. Hackett asked, in surprise.

"Course I do, else I wouldn't get it. I sell papers, an' sometimes make a pile; but when there ain't any news it's poor pickin's. If I could thump the head off of Tim Dooley, I'd get along a good deal better."

"Why do you want to do that?" the deacon, who had just come in from the stable, asked in astonishment.

"Well, you see he's a reg'lar duffer to begin with, an' then he's allers pickin' on fellers smaller 'n himself. He drives me away from all the best places, an' I have to take up with his leavin's. P'raps I'll be big enough some day, an' then I'll make him dance."

"No, no, my boy, you musn't think of fightin'" —

"I ain't countin' on it till I know how to spar — Jim Hinckley's goin' to show me, an' then I'll do the thing up in shape."

"But it is wicked to fight, my boy."

"You think so because you don't know Tim; but if he should come out here only for one day, you'd see the difference."

Garry thought it was time to speak a good word for her friend, otherwise he would be misunderstood; and she hastened to set matters right by saying promptly, —

"Tommy don't go 'round raisin' a row, 'cause he's promised me he wouldn't; but of course he's got to stand up for his rights sometimes, an' I know Tim Dooley is an awful boy. Mother says it would be jest a mercy if somebody should give him a downright good whipping. I'm in hopes Tommy'll grow a good deal out here, an' then p'raps he can do it."

The deacon and his wife looked at each other in surprise, and the former mentally resolved that it was his duty to show Master Tommy the evil of his proposed course. He was beginning to realize that something more should be done than simply amuse his guests, while Joey Ramsdell concluded that perhaps Tommy was a better fellow than he had at first fancied.

"I reckon we'd better let Joey show 'em 'round the farm, mother," the deacon said, as if in reply to an inquiring look from his wife. "We want they should get acquainted, an' after that has been done we can hear more about their lives in the big city. It's a wicked place," he added, with with a sigh, thinking of Tommy's aspirations as toward Tim Dooley.

"You know what to show them, Joey?" Mrs. Hackett said, half-questioningly.

"Course I do, else what am I here for. I don't reckon they want to go in swimmin'."

"Perhaps Tommy would like to some other time; but to-day you and he must stay all the time with poor Luke. Take them down by the brook where the flowers are brightest."

"An' don't trouble the brindle calf if you go into the barn. I've penned him up; but boys are master hands at worryin' dumb creeters," the deacon added.

"I'm certain this one wouldn't," Mrs. Hackett added, as she laid her hand gently on the cripple's shoulder; "an' he shall keep the others straight. I depend on you an' Garry, Luke, to see that Joey doesn't torment my Ajax."

"Who is he, ma'am?"

"My cat. There he is on the grass in the sun. He's been with father an' I since — since the children went away, an' has lived with sober people like us so long that he wouldn't take kindly to boys' rough ways."

"What made you call him such a queer name?" Garry asked. "It's almost as bad as mine."

"My nephew William chose it. He said it was after one of the old prophets, but I guess he must have been mistaken. Father thinks William meant to say Antioch, an' pronounced it wrong; but it doesn't make any difference, for he's used to Ajax now, an' I can't think he'd be comfortable with any other name. Don't worry him or the calf; but go anywhere you please, an' pick all the lowers you want."

Joey was on the broad stone step impatiently waiting to begin his work as guide; and the guests went out into the sunlight, inhaling deep draughts of the odorous air as they wondered at he beauty of everything around them.

Garry led Luke in a motherly fashion, keeping careful watch over his every step, and making certain he was being amused, before giving herself up to the happiness of being among the birds and the flowers, where was no one to make her afraid.

Joey led the guests down the long lane, past the trimly kept flower garden with its wealth of old maids' pinks, larkspur, and burning bush, across the yellow road where Luke's crutches sank inches deep in the golden sand, through the bars, into the pasture.

"Mis' Hackett said I was to go down by the brook," he whispered, when they were a short distance from the house; "but there's no fun in that place. I'm goin' to take you where woodchuck-holes are thicker'n spatter."

"What are woodchucks?" Tommy asked.

"Woodchucks! Don't you know a woodchuck when you see him? Well, you must be awful green, an' it ain't much wonder that feller in the city can get the best of you. Why, they're things like dogs, only a good deal smaller, an' with different kind of hair, besides their tails don't look nothin' alike."

"Whose tails?" and now Tommy spoke in what was very nearly an impatient tone, so thirsty was he for knowledge.

"Why, a woodchuck's tail ain't like a dog's, an' they've got sharper claws."

"What will you do when you find 'em?" Garry asked.

"Jest show you where they are; an' some day Tommy an' me'll ketch a whole slat — if the deacon'll give us some boards to make traps with, an' we can get the right kind of bait."

"Hadn't you as soon go to the brook now, an' find the woodchucks when you an' Tommy try the swimmin'?" Garry asked. "Luke can't walk very far, an' I never saw a reg'lar wild brook, where flowers grow."

Joey looked reprovingly for an instant at the girl who preferred to see an ordinary brook when woodchuck-holes might be found, and then with the air of one who makes a sacrifice and wishes it should be known, turned toward the road once more.

"Come on this way, if that's all you want to see. If I'd knowed you was after them things I'd brought some fish-lines." Then to Tommy he added in a whisper, "I don't think much of havin' a girl taggin' 'round everywhere a feller wants to go, do you?"

"But this is Garry," Tommy replied in surprise. "Why, I'd be willin' to go home this very

minute rather than stay out here a whole month, an' her not have a good time."

Joey had not expected such a reply from a boy who hoped to grow strong enough to flog Tim Dooley, and for at least the third time that day he was deeply disappointed.

He did not even make an attempt at amusing the guests, but walked silently, almost sulkily, across the road; and those who followed had no idea his temper had been aroused, so delighted were they with everything around them.

The path through the woods led to a cleared space on the bank of the brook; when they were thus shut out from the rest of the world, Luke said, with a sigh of satisfaction, as he seated himself upon a mound made soft by feathery moss: —

"Let's stay right here. We couldn't find a cosier place in all the world. I never believed things could be so beautiful."

"What?" Joey replied sharply. "Do you want to stop here where there's nothing to see?"

"You'd think there was plenty, if you'd never been in such a place before," Garry replied quickly. "I'm sure I'd like to stop right where we are till we've seen it so much we can remember what it looks like after we get back to the city."

"But there's no fun here."

"Then take Tommy swimmin'. We'll stay here till you get back, an' be glad of the chance."

"Will you go?" and Joey looked inquiringly at the only member of the party with whom he believed it would be possible for him to enjoy himself.

"Yes, if you want to so awful bad; but it's mighty nice here."

"Jest wait till we get down by the mill-pond, an' then your eyes will stick out. I'll show you how to ketch suckers till you can't rest."

"What's suckers?" and Tommy looked searchingly at his guide, as if fancying he might be trying to impose upon him in some way.

"Well, I never! Where'd you come from? First you don't know anything 'bout woodchucks, an' now ask what's suckers! They're fish, that's what they are; an' a feller can ketch more'n he can lug. I'll show you how."

Before he ceased speaking the young guide was walking rapidly away; and although he would have preferred to remain with his friends, Tommy felt that it was necessary to follow.

Left alone, Garry and Luke enjoyed themselves after their own desires, and it was in a fashion such as would have met with decided disapproval from Master Ramsdell.

Neither had any inclination to indulge in conversation. The scene was novel; and it was very much as if the woodland elves had cast a spell about these visitors from the city, holding them silent and motionless, but in no wise preventing them from drinking in deep draughts of pleasure.

Once or twice Luke gently motioned with his crutch to some daring squirrel or chipmunk who had danced fearlessly into the glen to catch a glimpse of the strangers, and several times Garry pinched herself to make certain she was not asleep and dreaming; but both remained as their guide had left them, until a piercing cry, now shrill and distinct, and again muffled, caused the girl to spring to her feet in alarm.

"Whatever can the matter be?" she cried. "I'm certain that's the boy who was hired to take care of us, an' he must have led Tommy into some terrible mischief! Stay right here till I find out what it is!"

Then Garry ran at full speed in the direction from which the appeals for help had come, leaving Luke at liberty to follow in his slow, halting fashion, or to remain where he was until she should return.

CHAPTER III.

THE RESCUE.

S she ran in the direction from which the cries for help had come, the one thought in Garry's mind was that Tommy was in danger, and she heeded not the impediments in her way, but pushed straight forward, regardless alike of the branches which threatened to tear her only presentable dress, and the noisy brook across which she was forced to wade, to the detriment of her shoes and stockings, twice before arriving at the mill-pond.

After the first series of shrieks, no sound betokening Tommy's whereabouts had reached her ears; and she halted in dismay upon emerging from the bushes, fancying she had mistaken the direction from which the noise proceeded, since no living thing was to be seen.

During a moment she stood tremulous with excitement, listening intently for something which should betray the place where Master Wright might be found, and was finally rewarded by

hearing the voice of the boy over whom she thought it necessary to exercise a maternal care.

"Well, I reckon you won't try to show me any more suckers. Seems to me, if I knew as much 'bout the place as you 'low to, I wouldn't 'a' tumbled in."

"Them rocks are mighty slippery. I was tellin' Deacon Hackett last week that he oughter have his hired man pile 'em up, or some of us fellers would get in; but he said as how we wouldn't be in any very great danger if we didn't go near the mill."

"'Cordin' to the way things have turned out, it seems as if he was pretty nigh right. We oughter staid with the other fellers, an' then this wouldn't happened. *Now* what'er we goin' to do?"

At this instant Garry came from behind the clump of bushes, where she could see the alleged expert fisherman and Master Wright, and an exclamation of mingled reproof and astonishment burst from her lips.

"Whatever have you two been doin'?" she cried, as she surveyed the boys, who stood in attitudes suggestive of discomfort, with the water dripping from every angle formed by their saturated garments. "Tommy Wright, have you

dared to go in swimmin' with your best clothes on?"

"Well, you see, Garry, it ain't exactly that way, 'cause I wasn't thinkin' much 'bout swimmin'. This feller, he 'lowed to show me how to ketch suckers, an' the first I knew dumped hisself head-first inter the water. I reckon he was too scared to remember how to swim, an' I had to go in after him. It did seem a shame to wet these swell clothes; but I was 'fraid the farmer what we're visitin' with had some use for the chump, so I pulled him out."

"I'd got ashore all right if you'd let me alone," Joey cried, just a trifle petulantly.

"Yes, you acted like that was what you counted on doin', when you yelled so loud. Why didn't you strike out?"

"I hadn't had time to begin; but I'd been all right in a minute or two longer."

"It didn't look very much that way," Tommy replied, winking vigorously toward Garry as if to intimate that his new acquaintance had been too greatly alarmed to be able to help himself.

"It don't make any difference how you got into the water," Garry said firmly, but speaking less sharply as she understood, or thought she did, that Tommy was not at fault. "The

question is, what'er you goin' to do now? It's a shame, Tommy Wright, that you should spoil your very best clothes the first day we're out here in the country, an' you did look too nice for anything; but now I expect you'll be a terrible fright."

"Oh, he'll dry off," Joey interrupted carelessly. "We'll go up to Mis' Hackett's, an' lay 'round the front yard in the sun."

From the expression on Garry's face, it seemed as if she was about to object to any such proceeding, when a cry was heard in the direction from which she had just come.

"There's poor Luke! I'd 'most forgotten him! I s'pose he's 'bout frightened out of his wits to know what the matter is! You boys follow me, an' we'll see what can be done after Luke is quieted down."

Then the anxious little woman rapidly retraced her steps; but Master Ramsdell was not in the mood to obey her instructions.

"I ain't goin' to be bossed by a girl," he said ill-naturedly. "I guess I know what oughter be done better'n her. We'll go right up to Mis' Hackett's, that's what we'll do."

"But we must tell her where we're goin', else she'll be frightened."

"Don't you worry 'bout her; I'll 'tend to things an' they'll come out all right."

"Same as they did when you was lookin' for suckers?"

"Oh, you think you're smart, don't you, jest 'cause you come from the city, an' have got it inter your head that I wanted you to pull me outer the water? But I didn't, an' you could'er stood on the bank jest as well as not till I was all right. Now I'm goin' straight to Mis' Hackett's, an' you can do whatever you've a mind to."

Tommy was quite positive he ought to obey Garry; but, in a certain sense, Joey was his host, and it seemed equally necessary he should follow his advice, more especially since Deacon Hackett's assistant felt agrieved by what had already been said.

Therefore it was that Garry, after rejoining Luke, who, in his slow, painful way had followed her some distance, waited in vain for the coming of the boys.

"I expect that feller what fell into the pond has made Tommy go up to the farmhouse with him, an' we must get there as quick as we can. Thomas Wright oughter be ashamed of himself, makin' trouble for that good lady, when he could have dried off here in the woods jest as well as

not! I don't s'pose she's used to children, an' it'll be a dreadful trial for her to have them two boys bringin' in oceans of water on her clean floor."

"Why don't you run on, Garry, an' see if you can't head 'em off? I'll get there in time, for I know the way."

"But I must help you along, Luke," Garry replied half-heartedly, for she was exceedingly anxious to prevent the boys from causing Mrs. Hackett any annoyance.

"There's no need of your doin' anything of the kind," the cripple said stoutly. "If I can get along in the city where it's hot an' the stones are slippery, I guess I can do as much out here, where the grass seems like velvet, an' it isn't hardly any trouble to walk."

"Are you sure you know the way?"

"Certain of it. I'll pick some flowers for you as I come along. It won't make any difference if I ain't back there for half an hour."

"Be careful not to get lost!" Garry cried warningly, as she darted off at full speed toward the white buildings which could be seen in the distance, nestling cosily amid the trees; and Luke shouted cheerily after her, —

"You'll have your hands full tryin' to keep Tommy straight, so don't bother 'bout me."

Mrs. Hackett, assisted by Mehitable, was busily engaged in the kitchen preparing such a dinner as would astonish her guests, both because of the quantity and the quality of the food, when Garry burst in upon her, frightening Ajax to such an extent that he leaped from the broad window-ledge out into the yard, and causing the good woman to start suddenly in alarm, as she cried in a trembling voice, —

"Mercy on us! What has happened now?"

"Have they got here yet?" Garry asked breathlessly.

"Who? What's the matter? Who's comin'?"

"Them boys; the one that lives here an' our Tommy. They're both wet as drownded rats, an' I'm 'fraid they'll make a terrible muss."

"Oh, is that all?" Mrs. Hackett exclaimed, with a sigh of relief, as she sank into a chair. "I was afraid something dreadful had happened! They haven't been here, my dear; an' you needn't worry about their makin' any muss for me. I should march them straight out of doors if they showed their heads in this kitchen. What happened?"

"Your boy fell into the water" —

"Don't call him my boy, child. It's Joey Ramsdell, an' I allow he must be a terrible care

to his mother. So he's gone an' blundered into the brook, eh?"

"He fell overboard down to what he called the mill, while he was tryin' to show Tommy how to catch suckers, an'" —

"Well, mother, I reckon you'd better take Joey an' that other chap, an' hang 'em out on a line to dry," said Deacon Hackett as he entered the kitchen with a smile of quiet amusement on his face. "They're layin' out there under the syringa bush, an' you'll have to 'tend to 'em."

Mrs. Hackett looked toward the stove an instant as if questioning whether it would be safe to leave unattended the evidences of her skill as a cook, and then said to Mehitable,—

"Rummage 'round in the attic, an' see what you can find for them children to put on. It'll never do to let them stay in their wet clothes."

This order given she started toward the "syringa bush;" and Garry, fearful lest the good woman should give herself unnecessary trouble, said as she followed her,—

"You needn't fuss much 'bout Tommy, 'cause he's used to sich things."

"He'll surely catch his death o' cold if he keeps his wet clothes on; but don't let it worry

you, dear. I shan't spend any too much time over them."

By the time she had ceased speaking, Mrs. Hackett stood before the boys, and Tommy looked up in dismay as if expecting a severe scolding for what he had done; but Master Ramsdell was in no wise abashed.

"If the deacon had let one of his men pile them rocks up where they belonged, I wouldn't fell in, Mis' Hackett; but it don't make no difference, 'cause I'll dry out in less'n no time."

"Joey," and the good woman tried to look stern, "what business had you to take the city children down to the mill? The deacon expected you'd have a care over them, instead of gettin' into mischief the very first thing."

"It wasn't mischief, Mis' Hackett, 'deed it wasn't. Don't you s'pose this feller wanted to know how to ketch suckers? An' didn't I have to show him?"

"Tommy didn't know that suckers was fish till your boy told him so," Garry interrupted, fearful lest her hostess should blame Tommy for what had been done.

The arrival of Mehitable with a huge bundle of cast-off clothing on her arm prevented Mrs. Hackett from replying to Garry. Dinner was

still on the stove, and might burn if she spent too long a time in the garden, therefore she said hurriedly, but severely, —

"If anything of this kind happens again, Joey, I shall send you home straight away. Now rig yourselves up as best you can in these clothes, an' hang your wet ones on the line in the back-yard."

"But" —

"Don't attempt to answer me back, Joey Ramsdell, for I haven't got time to 'tend to your foolishness. Do as I have told you, or home you go," said Mrs. Hackett, bringing the interview to an abrupt conclusion by taking hold of Garry's hand and leading her away, Mehitable following close at her heels.

When they were in the kitchen once more the good woman said, with a long-drawn sigh, after ascertaining that nothing in the culinary department had come to any harm during her absence, —

"The deacon hired Joey to take care of you children; but I'm afraid he's the one who needs lookin' after."

"I'm sure Luke an' Tommy won't get into mischief; an' I'm sorry your father was so foolish as to pay out good money for us. I expected I might have some trouble with Tommy, after he'd

been here long enough to get acquainted; but I made up my mind neither of 'em should fuss you any, an' they shan't, even if I have to give the Ramsdell boy a downright good scoldin'."

"I see I may depend on you, my child, an' I believe you can keep the others straight."

"I will, or Tommy shall go home before the two weeks are over. Ain't there anything I can do to help you?"

"You might feed the chickens. The dough is mixed, an' Mehitable will get it from the pantry. You'll find they'll come fast enough if you call 'em, an' rattle the spoon against the pan loud as you can."

Garry took the feeding-dish, walked gravely into the yard, and began to call in a low, imploring tone, —

"Chickens, chickens, here is your dinner. Come, chickens" —

"Land sakes alive! you'll never get 'em that way," Mehitable cried from the door. "This is the way: H-e-r-e c-h-i-c-k, chick-chick-chick-chick! H-e-r-e chick-chick-chick-chick!"

Almost before Garry was aware of what was taking place around her, a flock of all colors and sizes had responded to Mehitable's invitation, and were crowding each other in their efforts to get at

the feeding-pan, some of them flying directly on the girl's shoulders in their eagerness.

Garry screamed aloud in her delight at these friendly demonstrations; and when Luke hobbled into the yard, literally laden down with flowers, she cried excitedly, —

"Did you ever see such a sight in your life, Luke? Come an' help feed 'em; they're as greedy as ever Tommy could be."

The two visitors were in the highest state of delight because of the friendliness shown by the feathered inhabitants of the farm, and were so engrossed in this new sport that they paid no attention when Tommy and Joey came into view, until Garry chanced to catch a glimpse of the former's borrowed garments, when she was immediately seized with a fit of laughter which actually frightened the chickens away.

Both the boys presented a most comical appearance as they came across the yard clad in the cast-off clothes of the deacon's. Tommy had rolled his trousers up until there was such a thickness of cloth around his ankles that it was only with difficulty he could walk, and the vest hung nearly to his heels. He had wisely made no attempt to put on a coat.

Joey presented only a trifle less comical appear-

ance, and both acted as if ashamed of such masquerading.

"Did you hang up the wet things as Mis' Hackett told you?" Garry asked, as soon as it was possible for her to speak.

"I'll 'tend to that after dinner," Joey replied carelessly.

"Indeed you won't wait so long as that! Go straight an' — Of course you won't do it right, an' I may as well take care of 'em myself. No, I'll see to the things," she added, as Tommy was about to hurry away in the direction of the syringa bush. "They're the best clothes you ever had, an' I'm not goin' to run the risk of havin' 'em spoiled by carelessness."

During the next ten minutes Garry was engaged in her labor to the utter exclusion of everything else; and then she had only time to wash her hands before Mehitable summoned the guests and their guide to dinner.

Tommy, seated by Joey's side, was gazing in astonishment and delight at the many good things to be seen on the table, when, to his amazement, the deacon bowed his head and gave thanks for the food.

During the meal Master Wright appeared to be in a state of mingled amazement and bewilder-

ment; but not to such an extent as to prevent him from getting his full share; and when dinner was finally brought to a close, he motioned Garry to follow him into the yard.

"Why didn't you tell me they was goin' to have a prayer meetin'?" he asked, when they were where his words could not be overheard.

"But I didn't know it myself till the deacon begun."

"Well, you must watch out after this, 'cause I don't want to act green if they spring another on us."

"I guess that was 'cause Joey didn't get drownded, an' it ain't likely the deacon will say anything more about it," Garry replied, as she hastened indoors to assist in washing the dishes.

CHAPTER IV.

JOEY'S DISPLEASURE.

DURING the afternoon Joey Ramsdell very unwillingly remained in the immediate vicinity of the house. The deacon's cast-off clothing in which he was arrayed prevented him from moving around readily, owing to the length of trousers and coat; and he amused himself by giving Tommy most wonderful accounts of his prowess as a hunter.

"No, I never killed a bear," he said in reply to the visitor's question; "but I could do it as easy as nothin'. Jest let a bear come foolin' 'round here, an' see how quick I'll tumble him over."

"Have you got a gun?"

"No; but I reckon the deacon would be glad enough to lend me his, if bears come 'round. He wouldn't like to have his sheep killed, would he?"

"Why couldn't he shoot it?"

"I don't b'lieve he'd want to, 'cause he's so

awful good. That man wouldn't hurt a fly, he wouldn't. Why, when I wanted to tie paper on Ajax's feet jest to see the old feller hop, the deacon thought it was terrible, an' come pretty nigh prayin' with me 'bout it."

"Does he do much of that sort of thing?"

"You'll think so by the time you've been here a week. He prays every time he eats, an' in the mornin' an' at night besides."

Tommy was silent a moment, and then said thoughtfully, —

"If he's so terrible good I shouldn't think there'd be any need of it. Now, a feller like me might have to do it; but I don't see why he should."

"Neither do I; but he does it all the same. Say, let's go out to the barn where the calf is."

"Will it be all right?"

"Course, if I say so. Ain't I hired for nothin' else but to show you fellers 'round?"

"I reckon you are; but it seems like a waste of good money if you keep on doin' it same's you did this forenoon."

Just at this moment Luke came slowly out of the kitchen, and Tommy invited him to join them.

The cripple and Tommy thought they had

never seen anything as wonderful as the huge barn, with its enormous mows of hay and the many stalls for the cattle; but Master Ramsdell treated it as quite an inferior place.

"Before you go home I'll take you 'round to 'Squire Waterhouse's farm. He's got a barn that knocks this one out of sight. I s'pose it's twenty times as big."

"I don't b'lieve that could be," Tommy said bluntly; and although Luke was not so rude, he felt quite positive Master Ramsdell was trifling with the truth.

The calf was visited and admired by the strangers, while Joey told stories of the animals he had owned, and boasted of their superiority to the one before them.

"If the deacon wasn't home we'd let this feller out, an' have fun chasin' him; but I reckon it would make a row if we did."

"We don't want to get into any trouble," Luke said decidedly. "It was mighty good of the deacon to let us come here, an' the least we can do is to behave ourselves. What is that pile of stuff?"

"Them's seed pease; they're here to be shelled. I hate that kind of work, an' it seems as if everywhere I go there's some of it to be done."

"Tommy an' I'll try our hand at it. Garry says we must make ourselves useful, an' it 'pears as if this was a good chance."

Master Wright was perfectly willing to do as Luke proposed, while Joey Ramsdell stood idly by, thinking that "city fellers" were the most foolish boys he ever saw. The idea of working when there was no absolute necessity for it!

Half an hour later the deacon entered the fore-room where Mrs. Hackett was teaching Garry how to knit, and said in a tone of satisfaction: —

"I don't reckon them boy visitors are goin' to give us much of any trouble. They're out in the barn shellin' pease as industrious as bees, an' Joey is propped up agin the cow-pens lookin' as if he didn't enjoy himself."

"They promised to help you all they could, an' I know they'll do it," Garry replied, while Mrs. Hackett motioned for her husband to watch the child as she struggled bravely to master the intricacies of the "seam" stitch.

"Seems kinder pleasant to have children 'round the place agin, don't it, mother?" the deacon said, after a long pause. "I really believe we'll be lonesome when they go away."

"I wish it could be that you'd like to keep one of us all summer," Garry said timidly.

"Why? Have you got a hankerin' for the country?"

"Oh it ain't myself I mean. Of course I'd like to stay in such a place as this, but it couldn't be, 'cause mother wouldn't know what to do without me; but Tommy an' I was talkin' on the cars that if you'd let Luke stay while it was hot weather, we'd earn money enough to pay his board. He'd get real strong if he lived in a beautiful home like this."

Neither Mr. nor Mrs. Hackett made any reply; and Garry's head was bent lower and lower over her work to hide the flaming cheeks, for she felt ashamed at having made a proposition which sounded very much like begging.

Then, after a long time of silence, she gathered sufficient courage to say: —

"I wouldn't spoken 'bout it if Luke hadn't been lame, an' mother says he'll never be any better in the city."

The deacon left the room abruptly; and there was a strange light in Mrs. Hackett's eyes which caused Garry to believe she had offended those who had been more kind to her than any she could remember, with the exception of her mother, and her heart was very heavy.

Not until nearly time for supper did the boys

come into the house, and then they brought with them the pease which had been shelled.

"We did up that job in great shape," Tommy said triumphantly, as he gave the result of their labors to Mrs. Hackett. "Our clothes got dry, so we put 'em on, 'an I hung the others on the line. I wonder if there ain't somethin' else we could do?"

"You might bring the cows from pasture, I suppose, an' it would be doin' a good turn for the deacon. He's grown so rheumaticky that it beats him all out to walk far. Can't you show 'em the way, Joey?"

"I s'pose I might," Master Ramsdell replied petulantly; "but when I made the trade with the deacon I didn't reckon these fellers would want to work all the time."

"If you call what we've been doin', 'work,' you should see Tommy when he's home," Luke replied gravely. "He's on the street sellin' papers almost as soon as light, an' stays there, no matter how hard it storms or how hot the sun is, till dark. Shellin' pease is fun for him, an' there's nothin' we'd like better than to go after the cows."

"I'll go too," and Garry laid her knitting-work on the mantel. "I want to see how the milk comes."

"It's strange that them city children make so little trouble," Mrs. Hackett said thoughtfully to Mehitable after the visitors and their guide had disappeared. "When the deacon made up his mind to have 'em here, I allowed we shouldn't get a minute's peace; but they're much better behaved than Joey."

"Which ain't saying a great deal," Mehitable replied curtly.

If Joey Ramsdell had been permitted to manage matters after his own fashion, the cows would not have been brought home in time for the deacon to milk before dark; but Garry insisted, when he proposed to show the visitors "a slat of woodchuck-holes," that they must not loiter, and Tommy's indifference to this last scheme caused the guide to lose his temper.

"I allers thought city fellers 'mounted to something," he cried angrily; "but all you seem to care 'bout is moonin' 'round pickin' weeds, or makin' fools of yourselves by workin'. I counted on havin' a good time while you was here; but reckon I was mistaken."

"Tommy an' Luke will be glad to go 'most anywhere after a while," Garry replied decidedly; "but no matter what you want to do, they must make themselves useful 'round the farm to help

pay for the sight of food we eat. Even if I never was in the country before, I know that when we're sent for the cows, it means we're to go an' come right back, not to hunt for holes in the ground, till the poor things can't see the way home."

"An' I s'pose you're goin' to let her boss you?" Joey asked in a scornful tone, as he turned toward Tommy.

"Who? Garry? Well, if you knowed her as well as me an' Luke does, you'd like to have her boss. Garry's the best feller in this or any other town, an' I'm ready to do whatever she wants."

There was an expression of deepest disappointment on Joey's face as he gazed reproachfully from one to the other, and then walked slowly away, as if suffering so much mental anguish that speech was impossible.

"Now he's mad an' gone home," Tommy said, with very little regret apparent in his tones. "I'm kinder sorry we didn't keep on the right side of him."

"It's better to do what the deacon wants, than chase him all over the country; but how are we to know what cows to drive back?" and Garry looked in perplexity at the herd of cattle standing by the bars.

"Which ones? Why, they want all of 'em, of course," Tommy said confidently; and, without waiting for further discussion, he, after considerable difficulty, succeeded in letting down the bars.

The deacon was just entering the barn-yard with his milking-pail when the visitors drove the cattle up the lane, and a broad smile overspread his face as he saw the procession.

"We got 'em all!" Tommy cried triumphantly.

"Yes, I see you have," was the grim reply. "What made you bring the steers an' calves?"

"So's you could milk 'em."

"I reckon there's a good many here that it wouldn't pay to spend much time on," and the deacon appeared to be trying very hard to refrain from laughing. "I'll put the cows inter the barn, an' you'd better drive the rest back, that is," he added doubtfully, "if you think you can."

"That'll be easy enough," Tommy replied confidently, but at a loss to understand why some should be singled out and the others sent back.

It was not as simple a matter as Tommy supposed, to get the cattle into the pasture again; but he and Garry succeeded after a great deal of running and shouting, and the three visitors returned by the time the deacon had concluded the task of milking.

"I generally do this after supper," he explained, as he brought the pails of foaming milk out to the gate where Mehitable was waiting to receive them; "but we had dinner so late to-day that mother thought she'd keep supper back a spell. Where's Joey?"

Garry explained that the guide had been offended because they would not follow his instructions implicitly; and the deacon said, with a quiet smile: —

"If I'd knowed you children a leetle better, I wouldn't thought there was any call to have somebody chasin' you 'round; an' if Joey's willin' to let me out of my bargain, I'm more'n willin' to cry quits."

At the supper-table Tommy was prepared for the "prayer meeting," thanks to Master Ramsdell; and when the meal was finished, and Garry had helped Mehitable "do the dishes," the visitors seated themselves on the broad stone door-step, fully alive to the beauty and peacefulness of their surroundings.

"Wouldn't it be jest splendid if Luke lived in a place like this?" Garry asked in a guarded tone, lest the deacon and his wife, who were near the open door inside the room, should overhear and think she was begging again.

"It seems to me I'd get so's I could walk like other folks, if I staid in the country," Luke said, with a long-drawn sigh; "but I mustn't think 'bout it, 'cause we've got to go back, an' there's no use spoilin' our good time with what can't be helped."

An hour after sunset the children were shown to their beds; and when Mrs. Hackett had bade each good-night, as she kissed them all impartially, Tommy called in a hoarse whisper to Garry, who was in the adjoining apartment: —

"Say, ain't this great? We've got a reg'lar bed, so soft that I'm 'most afraid to get inter it!"

"*Will* you smell of the sheets?" Garry replied excitedly. "I do b'lieve there's cologne on 'em!"

"It's great, that's jest the size of it. If I'd knowed this was how folks in the country lived, you can bet I'd never made fun of a farmer when I seen him in the city! This is the softest snap I ever fell inter! Is there a window in your room, Garry?"

"Yes, an' it's got the dearest muslin curtain I ever saw."

"Same here. I'm goin' to set up an' look out the window a spell, so's I won't forget what a swell time I'm havin'."

"But Luke ought to go to bed at once. He walked too far when we went after the cows."

"I'm in there already," the lame boy said in a tone of content, "an' I don't count on keepin' Tommy company, for this bed is too good to lose; I wish I'd come up here sooner."

Tommy was so excited by the novelty of his surroundings that it seemed impossible for him to sleep; and his companions had been wrapped in slumber nearly two hours when, from his seat at the window, he saw two dark forms stealing softly toward the barn from the direction of the road.

For an instant he fancied some members of the household were astir, and then he realized that the deacon was the only man who lived on the farm.

Leaning far out of the window he could gain a view of all the windows on that side of the house, and from none of them came a ray of light. This was, to him, sufficient proof that the family had long since retired; and he gazed more earnestly than before at the dark figures which were now seen but dimly within the shadow cast by the barn.

That they were strangers seemed positive; for they tried first one door and then another with-

out being able to effect an entrance, and then suddenly disappeared from view, although Tommy was certain they had not returned to the road.

Only during a moment did he remain silent and motionless, trying to decide what he should do; and then, going to the door of Garry's room, he called her softly by name.

The second summons aroused her from slumber, and hurriedly Tommy related what he had seen.

"Do you s'pose we'd better call the deacon?" he asked, as the story was concluded.

"That would be too bad if the men belong to the farm; an', besides, he might think it wasn't jest the thing for us to be spyin' 'round the place when we oughter be asleep."

"But s'posen them fellers I saw haven't any business 'round here?"

Garry was silent during a moment, and then she asked: —

"Can't you get out of doors without wakin' up the deacon an' his wife?"

"Of course I can. It won't be any job at all to shin down on the woodbine."

"Couldn't I do it too?"

"Sure. A feller could jump out if he wanted to, for it ain't very far to the ground."

"Then wait till I get dressed."

Five minutes later the two visitors were making their way down from the chamber by aid of the vine, and so noiseless were their movements that not even Luke's slumbers were disturbed.

CHAPTER V.

A NIGHT OF EXCITEMENT.

NEITHER Garry nor Tommy found it a very difficult matter to clamber down, by aid of the woodbine, from the chamber-window to the ground. Both had achieved much more difficult feats many times before, but never when it had seemed absolutely necessary to move without making a noise.

"It would be terrible if we should wake the deacon," Garry whispered nervously.

"Why?"

"'Cause he'd think we was out here tryin' to steal somethin', else why didn't we come before dark? Tommy, do you s'pose we can get back into our rooms?"

"Course we can. I could almost reach that window by jumpin'. After I've given you a boost, you can reach down an' help me. That part of it is all right, an' if the deacon should find us here we'd only have to tell him the dead square truth. What had we better do first?"

"See who them men are, an' if they're all right get back into our beds," Garry replied in a matter-of-fact tone.

Although he would not have admitted such a thing, Tommy felt just a trifle frightened at what he had done, and was about to do. Not for an instant did he think of turning back; but he wished he had not seen the strangers, and then, instead of prowling around the deacon's door-yard in the night, he would be snugly tucked up in that wonderful bed where Luke was having such a jolly time, without being aware of the fact.

"Why don't you go ahead?" Garry whispered impatiently. "What are you waitin' here for?"

"I was only wonderin' whether the deacon would like it if he knew what we're about?"

"Its too late for anything of that kind now," was the decided reply. "If we find that the men belong here on the farm, we'll get back without any one's knowin' it, an' never say a word 'bout what we've done."

Tommy could do no less than go ahead, but he took good care to assure himself that Garry remained very close at his heels.

As a rule, neither of the visitors was afraid to be abroad after dark; but out here in the coun-

try, where such odd sounds were to be heard, it seemed entirely different from the city; and before they arrived at the barn the croaking of a frog caused them to clutch each other in genuine fear.

"What *was* that?" Tommy asked nervously.

"It must be some kind of a bird, though he sings queer, don't he?"

"I should say he did! Look here, Garry, s'pose we go back? You know the deacon might come out any minute, an' be mad 'cause we're snoopin' 'round like this. Besides, p'haps one of them fellers I saw was him."

"That couldn't be; he wouldn't sneak 'round his own farm. We've got to find out what's goin' on, even if we *are* scared."

"Who said I was 'fraid?"

"I thought you acted so, an'—I *do* wish I knew for certain that that was a bird!" she cried nervously, as the frog croaked again.

"It don't sound very much like one," and Tommy turned involuntarily toward the house; but, mastering his fears a moment later, he started boldly forward, saying as he did so, "Keep close behind me, an' I'll see you ain't hurt."

Although the barn was not more than thirty yards from the house, it seemed to the children

as if they had walked a mile or more when they finally arrived within the welcome shadow of the building.

Twice during the short journey had the "bird" sung, or croaked, but neither allowed the other to see any show of fear.

Standing close by the barn, they listened intently for some noise betokening the presence of human beings; and not until Garry was on the point of suggesting that they had come on a useless quest, was the sound of voices heard.

Two persons were speaking in low tones, apparently on the other side of the building; and while Tommy hesitated, uncertain what he should do, a tiny flame lighted up faintly a certain portion of the interior.

Two rough-looking men were standing near a mow of hay lighting their pipes, and now the watchers were quite certain the strangers were not in the employ of the deacon.

"They're a couple of bums on a tramp, an' have come in here to sleep," Tommy whispered. "I guess it's all right, 'cause the deacon's so good he wouldn't turn 'em out."

"But I'm certain he wouldn't like it if he knew they were lighting matches. Mehitable told me he was terribly scared about fire, an' didn't even come into the barn with a lantern."

Tommy did not feel exactly certain that it was his duty to arouse the deacon because of such a simple affair, and remained gazing at the men with no very great amount of curiosity, for he had seen many hundred of the same class in the city.

The first match burned up quickly and was extinguished, leaving the building shrouded in apparently deeper gloom than before; and one of the men could be heard saying irritably, —

"Why can't you do a thing right, stupid? That was the last match, an' my pipe ain't lighted."

"No it wasn't either. I've got three more, an' you shall have the lot of 'em if you'll stop your growlin'. Seems like that's all you do lately, is to find fault with somethin'."

The second blaze was kindled, and the man who had been accused of being a grumbler snatched the tiny bit of wood from his companion's hand.

Exactly how it happened Tommy never could say, because at the instant he was paying very little attention to the tramps; but certain it is that the lighted match fell to the floor, on which was strewn no slight amount of loose hay.

It seemed to the watchers as if hardly a second had elapsed before the flames were rising high in

the air, and both the men were scrambling to get out of the building in the shortest possible time, without giving any heed to the mischief which had been done.

"I knew somethin' dreadful would happen!" Garry cried in distress, and it was as if her own words served to restore her presence of mind. "Fire! Fire!" she shouted at the full strength of her lungs. "We must get in there, Tommy! Why don't you yell? Fire! Fire!"

Tommy joined in the alarm, and even as they screamed the two ran to and fro seeking some entrance to the building.

The tramps must have got in through a window, for no door was open; and several precious minutes had elapsed before Tommy discovered that the entrance to that portion of the barn used as a stable was secured only by a hook.

The fastening was high above his reach, however; and as he stood on tip-toes trying in vain to touch it, Garry said quickly, —

"Boost me up! I'll open it."

Tommy did as he was bidden, and an instant later the children were running at full speed through a passage they had noted while in the building with Joey.

It already seemed as if the huge mows were

on fire, so great was the glare, and so blinding the smoke; but as he went nearer Tommy realized that as yet only the loose hay on the floor was burning. There was no time to be lost, however, for the delay of a few seconds might be sufficient to insure the destruction of the building. The flames were creeping nearer and nearer the inflammable mass which completely filled the upper portion of the barn, and the cattle were lowing uneasily in their stalls.

"We must get some water!" Garry cried, as she tried in vain to open the large doors, and then ran outside by the same passage through which they had entered.

Tommy understood that before she could bring anything with which to fight the fire it would be too late, and he looked hurriedly around for some available weapon.

Nothing save a pitchfork could be seen; and hardly conscious of what he did, heeding not the fact that he had on his best and only decent suit of clothes, he threw himself directly into the centre of the fire, rolling first this way and then that, at the expense of severe pain, until the floor was covered with tiny sparks, but the flames were extinguished.

He was still engaged in this odd battle when

Deacon Hackett, followed by Garry, came in excitedly, the former with a small pitcher of water, the latter bringing a lighted candle.

"Bless my heart, the boy has killed himself tryin' to put the fire out!" the deacon exclaimed nervously, holding the pitcher above Tommy as if believing he required its contents.

At this juncture Mrs. Hackett, with only a quilt thrown over her night clothes, entered, and, fortunately, she still retained her presence of mind.

"Can't you see what the dear boy has done?" she cried. "Pour that water on the cinders, an' then fetch a couple of pails full. What do you expect to do with a pint pitcher?"

"I didn't realize what I was about, mother," the good man said meekly; and before he could act upon his wife's suggestion, Mehitable, with a bucket of water in each hand, joined the party.

She did not stop to speculate upon the reason of Tommy's odd behavior, but poured the water with the utmost impartiality over both him and the embers.

Half-stifled by the smoke and the cold liquid, Tommy leaped to his feet just in time to save himself from another drenching, and at that in-

stant he realized the extent of his injuries. His face smarted as if covered with live coals, while both hands were in the same condition, and the clothes in which Garry took so much pride were ruined beyond repair.

"Whatever made you think of doin' it that way, Tommy?" Garry asked, as she brushed the cinders from her ward's well-burned garments.

"I don't know. There didn't seem to be any other show, an' I knew you couldn't get water here in time."

"Are you hurt much?"

"I reckon not; but I'm smartin' mighty bad."

Mehitable brought two more pails of water, and by the aid of these the last spark was extinguished at the same moment that the deacon recovered his presence of mind.

"It won't do to have that candle here, mother, or there'll be more fire. Take it into the house, an' the children with it, while I stop a while to make certain there's no further danger. There'll be time enough to find out how this happened after you've fixed the boy up in proper shape."

Mrs. Hackett obeyed without a protest, and while she covered Tommy's face and hands with salve, afterward binding them up in the softest of bandages, she learned how the visitors had saved the

barn, and probably the other buildings, from destruction.

"You are both little heroes," she said, in a tremulous voice. Then she kissed Garry on the lips, and Tommy on the tip of the nose, the only uninjured portion of his face, and conducted them up stairs.

Luke was awakened by the entrance of his friend, and, quite naturally, wanted to know what had happened.

"It wasn't much," Tommy said in what he intended should be a careless tone. "A couple of tramps come mighty nigh settin' the barn on fire, an' Garry an' me had to put it out, that's all."

"Indeed, it isn't all, Luke," Garry cried from her chamber. "Tommy saw the tramps 'round the barn, an' went out to watch 'em —"

"You went with me."

"Of course I did. We saw 'em set the hay in a blaze, an' while I ran like a silly for water, Tommy jest rolled the fire out; but he's destroyed his very best clothes, an' will look like an awful fright when we go in the cars agin."

"Did you get burned much?" Luke asked; and Tommy replied in a whisper:

"I didn't let on to Garry, but I ache mighty bad; seems like I was scorched all over, an' I

reckon I won't have sich a good time in that bed as you will."

It was a long while before the guests had quieted down sufficiently to sleep, Tommy, owing to the pain, being the last to lose himself in the unconsciousness of slumber, and not until a late hour next morning did either awaken.

"I shouldn't have called if you hadn't come down till noon," Mrs. Hackett said, as Garry entered the kitchen, ready to make excuses for having remained in bed so long. "When I think that but for you children we'd been burned out of house an' home, it seems as if there wasn't anything too good for you."

Joey Ramsdell was sitting on the door-step, evidently having repented of relinquishing his position as guide; and he said petulantly, before Garry could reply: —

"Seems to me, Mis' Hackett, that you're makin' a good deal of fuss 'bout nothin'. If I'd been here, I'll bet I could 'a fixed things up in shape, an' never got burned, either. Why, when Squire Waterhouse's barn"—

"Never mind about that, Joey. I dare say you mean well; but there are times when you're more trouble than profit."

Then the good woman bustled around to make

ready fresh bandages for Tommy, and by the time he made his appearance she was ready to dress his wounds.

Master Ramsdell had evidently decided to treat the work of saving Deacon Hackett's barn as something of no particular importance; but when he saw the hugh blisters on Tommy's face and hands, he was reduced to comparative silence.

"Seems to me you got more'n your share," he said in a friendly tone; but Tommy made no reply. Just at that moment Mrs. Hackett was necessarily causing the invalid considerable pain as she dressed his wounds, and he was not in a mood for conversation.

Joey insisted that it was nothing more than his lawful right to eat breakfast with those whom he had been hired to care for, regardless of the fact that he had already broken his fast at home; and when the meal was brought to a close he beckoned Tommy to follow him out of doors.

"Where are you goin'?" Master Wright asked, as the guide led the way to the front of the house.

"Only out here where nobody won't hear me. Say, Tommy, the deacon thinks you did a mighty big thing last night. He has been all over the

neighborhood tellin' folks you saved him from bein' burned up, an' all that kind of stuff."

"I didn't do so very much," Tommy replied modestly.

"That's jest what I said. You didn't do any more'n me or some other feller would; but all the same the deacon's got it inter his head that you're an awful smart chap, an' now's your time!"

"Time for what?" Tommy asked in astonishment.

"To get anything you want. I reckon the deacon would do jest what you wanted him to, an'" —

"But I don't want him to do anything. He's been mighty good to let us come here for two weeks, an' I never can square that off."

"But he thinks different, an' I'll tell you what to do. Ask him to give you the brindle calf, an' then you give me half. We'll train him, an' I know we could get more'n a hundred chances to travel in a circus with him after he can do tricks."

"You don't s'pose for a minute that I'd ask the deacon to give me any'hing, do you?"

"Why not?"

"'Cause I'd be a chump if I did."

Master Ramsdell looked at the well-bandaged

boy in silence a moment, and then said in an injured tone, as he turned majestically toward the gate: —

"I thought fellers from the city had some backbone; but you're a reg'lar softy, that's what *you* are!"

CHAPTER VI.

LUKE'S FUTURE.

NOT until dinner was ready did Master Ramsdell make any display of friendliness toward Tommy. That this fellow from the city should refuse to gain possession of a valuable calf, when it could have been his with so little difficulty, seemed the height of foolishness, and Joey was thoroughly angry that such an opportunity should escape him.

When the table was spread for dinner, however, and he saw on it two of those famous custard pies, he could hold out no longer; but said in a friendly tone to Tommy, who, seated on the broad stone step, was nursing his wounds, and watching with the liveliest interest the mother turkey as she tended her brood, —

"Of course, if you don't want the calf, that settles it; but you don't know what you're losin'."

"I'd be 'shamed to ask for anything jest 'cause I happened to put the fire out."

"Then we won't say a word more 'bout it. Say, Tommy, I s'pose you know custard pie ain't jest the kind of stuff for a feller what's pretty nigh burned up to eat, don't you?"

"I didn't, but if that's so, I reckon I can get along without any to-day."

"Your share shan't be wasted, 'cause I'll take care of it; so, when Mis' Hackett passes it 'round, shove your piece over to me without sayin' anything 'bout it."

"I see now why it ain't healthy for me to eat it," Tommy replied grimly. "P'haps I'll get better before dinner-time."

Again Joey looked disappointed, but he ventured no further remonstrance against Tommy's partaking of the dainty, and, half an hour later, was still further saddened by seeing Master Wright eating the custard with evident relish.

Now that Tommy was an invalid, there was no question of the visitors wandering very far from the farm, and Deacon Hackett suggested to Joey that his services would not be required until Master Wright had fully recovered.

"That's all right; when I make a trade, I don't count on backin' out. I'll hang 'round in case they *should* happen to go anywhere.

You see, deacon, I musn't lose sight of 'em a minute while it's light, if I count on earnin' them ten cents honest."

"Then I'll have to hire Garry to watch over *you*. It is a fact, Joey, that you're liable to cause more disturbance 'round this farm than all three of the visitors put together."

"If I wasn't right on hand takin' care of things, you'd see a difference," Joey replied gravely, and then, observing that Mehitable was bringing something from the pantry, Master Ramsdell hastened in-doors, that he might get his full share.

During three days the "city children" remained in or very near the house, and Mrs. Hackett had no occasion to reprove them for having done any mischief. Garry watched the boys constantly, and more than once did she prevent Joey from putting into practice some wild scheme, which might have annoyed the deacon or his wife.

After Tommy had so far recovered from the injury received on the night of the fire that the bandages could be removed, he was not inclined to follow the hired guide's instructions, and never did Joey remember having indulged in such harmless amusements, as during the remainder of the visitors' stay.

Tommy's best suit of clothes had been destroyed when he saved the barn from being burned; but Mrs. Hackett and Mehitable worked most industriously, washing, ripping, and cutting over the deacon's cast-off garments, with such good effect, that at the end of a week Master Wright had two full suits of the best clothes he had ever dreamed of owning.

"I'm goin' to be a howlin' swell when I get home agin," he said to Garry one evening, when they were alone, and he had tried on the new garments for at least the tenth time.

"But you mustn't think of wearin' 'em every day, Tommy. The old ones are good enough to sell papers in, an' these must be kept to go visitin' with."

"Now, wouldn't that be a fine idee, Garry? When do you think I'll ever get another chance to swell 'round? I reckon this blow-out will have to last me two or three years; an' the next time there's any free scursions, mother an' the kids will scoop 'em in. I've had my share."

Tommy had reason to change his mind within a very few days.

It was Sunday evening. Master Ramsdell had been instructed not to show himself at the farm from Saturday night until Monday morning, and

the visitors were sitting in the fore-room with the deacon's family.

To the three children the church-going had been decidedly interesting, although it is doubtful if Tommy could repeat very much of the sermon, and Garry was wondering why the deacon did not begin the family worship, as was his custom at about this time in the evening, when the good man asked abruptly, —

"Tommy, would you like to live here all the time?"

"You bet I would!" was the prompt reply; and an instant later he added thoughtfully, "I mean, I would if it wasn't for mother an' the youngsters; they couldn't get along without me nohow."

"Would it make you happy if you knew Luke was to stay with mother an' I?"

"Say, deacon, now you're talkin'! Why, if you could find a place here for Luke, Garry an' me would pay his board every week. Of course we couldn't put up a big pile — not enough to square it for all the good things he'd get in this place; but we'd do whatever you said was right."

"Don't you think you ought to be paid for saving the barn the other night?"

"Of course I don't; an' yet it seems to me as

if I'd struck it mighty rich, for now I've got two new suits of clothes, an' either one of 'em is twice as good as them what was burned."

"Do you think that was a fair price for savin' all the buildings on this farm? They'd have burned for certain, if that fire had once got well under way, for there's no engine at the Corner."

"Say, deacon," and now Tommy looked really distressed, "I wish you wouldn't talk 'bout my havin' pay for a little thing like that. I'd be a awful chump if I didn't want to do somethin' after all the good time you've let us fellers have."

"That may be; but perhaps I can't help feelin' that something ought to be done in the way of payment, an' yet what mother an' me have made up our minds to will bring us more pleasure than it will you. Suppose we take Luke to live here always, an' be our boy in place of them who have outgrown the nest?"

A half-suppressed cry of joy burst from Garry's lips, and Tommy felt forced to give vent to his feelings by a prolonged shrill whistle.

"Do you mean to do that?" he cried, stepping suddenly to the side of Luke, who, with his head on his crutch, was giving way to tears of joy.

"If he is willin' to stay with us old folks we'll take good care of him, an' we'll say it was done

to give you some kind of a reward for saving the barn. It'll really be you and Garry who's doin' it, while mother an' I'll have all the pleasure. We shall expect to see both of you at Christmas, an' every summer you shall be welcome to stay on the farm as long as you can be away from business. We won't talk any more about it now, for it is time to read our chapter," the deacon added, as he saw that Luke was almost overpowered by feelings of gratitude and joy.

During the remainder of their visit it seemed as if Garry and Tommy spent their entire time seeking an opportunity to show their gratitude to the deacon and his wife for what they proposed doing. Although either of them would have been more than delighted at being allowed to live on the farm, they appeared to think that Luke was the only one of the party who should be so favored, and evidently considered themselves under personal obligations for the benefits which the cripple was to enjoy.

All too quickly the day on which they must return arrived.

The deacon and his wife would have kept them longer, for now they had no fear that city visitors might be a "dreadful plague;" but Garry insisted they should return on the day set.

"It wouldn't be fair to other children who get such splendid chances as this. They'd think they oughter have more'n two weeks, if we did, an' we couldn't always tell 'em how it happened."

Therefore it was that at the time originally appointed for their return, old Dobbin, harnessed to the two-seated wagon, stood before the kitchen door waiting to take the visitors to the station.

The farewells had been spoken to the calf, Ajax, the chickens, Mrs. Hackett, and Mehitable, and Garry stood holding Luke's hand in hers.

"I know you'll be a good boy, Luke; for you couldn't help it out here, no matter how bad you felt. *Do* be careful of your clothes, an' try real hard not to wear many holes in your stockings, 'cause Mis' Hackett can't be expected to spend all her time on you."

"I'm bound to behave myself, Garry, after all that these kind folks are doin' for me, an' I'll remember what you say. Mehitable has promised to show me how to knit, for even a cripple can do such work as that; an' p'haps it'll come 'round so's I can do somethin' to help along. You'll tell everybody what the deacon an' his wife have done; an' you'll remember every minute of the day that if it hadn't been for you an' Tommy, I might be on the Island, in the work-house, or some such dreadful place."

"We won't remember anythin' of the kind," Tommy replied hotly, "'cause that never would have happened. You'll have a high old time here, an' we'll see you Christmas. Joey says the deacon has as many as four turkeys, all stuffed an' roasted, to help him out then; an' me an' Garry'll be here to see what they taste like. It's an awful soft snap you've got, Luke; an' if it wasn't for mother an' the youngsters, I'd wish for one jest like it myself. Do you know, I b'lieve I can get away with Tim Dooley now; an' if I do, you shall hear of it the very first thing."

There was a suspicious moisture in Tommy's eyes as he clambered into the wagon, carrying a "reg'lar satchel" in which were all his worldly belongings, increased to a wonderful degree by the many good things Mrs. Hackett had given him to take to his mother.

Garry kissed the crippled lad very tenderly, and then ascended to her place on the vehicle quickly, as if afraid to trust herself to say anything more. She also was carrying home a plentiful supply of dainties from the farm; and, as Joey said, "it seemed like as if they was tryin' to lug off all the stuff at the Corner."

During the ride to the station Joey was remarkably friendly, for he realized that he had

not shown a very kind spirit when the visitors refused to accompany him on proposed excursions in search of bears or Indians; but neither Garry nor Tommy indulged in much conversation until the ride had come to an end, and then Master Wright said, as he took one of the deacon's hands in both of his: —

"You're a reg'lar brick, an' if you'll only come up to the city some time the fellers shall show what they think 'bout it, 'cause I'm goin' to make it my business to let folks know how you've treated us. If you an' your mother would only come, we'd put up the highest old time that ever was. I'd be willin' to break myself givin' you a great old lay-out."

"The good God has blessed us with another son, Tommy; an' instead of makin' any sacrifices, it is mother an' I who'll be made happy. See here," and now the deacon whispered softly, "if it should ever happen that you or Garry was in trouble, you'd know where to come?"

"You bet I would!"

"An' you wouldn't hesitate to let us know?"

"Not a bit of it, deacon; an' if any time you think of somethin' I could do for you, send word, won't you?"

A warm pressure of the hand as the good man

coughed in an odd sort of fashion; and Garry, before any one had a suspicion of what she was about to do, put both arms around the old man's neck as she kissed him on the nose as well as on both cheeks.

There was no opportunity for anything further in the way of leave-taking. The panting engine had come to a stop at the Corner, and with many a puff of steam explained that it could not remain many seconds, therefore the visitors were forced to hurry on board the train, Joey shouting after them, as they struggled to drag inside from the plaform their many packages: —

"Take care of yourselves, fellers. I may run up to Boston this fall; an' if I do, I'll hunt you out."

THE SUNSHINE LIBRARY

(Continued)

Laddie. EVELYN WHITAKER
Little Foresters. CLARENCE HAWKES
Little Peter. LUCAS MALET
Little Sunshine's Holiday. MISS MULOCK
Master Frisky. CLARENCE HAWKES
Master Sunshine. MRS. C. F. FRASER
Miss De Peyster's Boy. ETHELDRED B. BARRY
Miss Toosey's Mission. EVELYN WHITAKER
Molly. BARBARA YECHTON
Musical Journey of Dorothy and Delia. BRADLEY GILMAN
Our Uncle the Major. JAMES OTIS
Pair of Them. EVELYN RAYMOND
Playground Toni. ANNA CHAPIN RAY
Play Lady. ELLA FARMAN PRATT
Prince Prigio. ANDREW LANG
Riverpark Rebellion. HOMER GREENE
Short Cruise. JAMES OTIS
Smoky Days. EDWARD W. THOMSON
Snap Dragons. MRS. J. H. EWING
Stephen. A Story of the Little Crusaders. EVA A. MADDEN
Strawberry Hill. MRS. C. F. FRASER
Sunbeams and Moonbeams. LOUISE R. BAKER
Tale of the Tow Path. HOMER GREENE
The Truth about Santa Claus. CHARLOTTE M. VAILE
Two and One. CHARLOTTE M. VAILE
Whispering Tongues. HOMER GREENE
Wonder Ship. SOPHIE SWETT
Wreck of the Circus. JAMES OTIS
Young Boss. EDWARD W. THOMSON

PUBLISHED BY
THOMAS Y. CROWELL CO.
NEW YORK

Y0-EJL-524